

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 CPR-01 PM-05 OPR-02 PA-01

PRS-01 SS-15 SY-05 A-01 NSCE-00 USIE-00 SSO-00

AF-10 L-03 OES-07 ACDA-07 SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-07

IO-13 NSAE-00 EB-08 NRC-05 FEA-00 DODE-00

ERDA-05 INRE-00 /111 W

-----031543 241143Z/14

O 241123Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1484

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (TINDEMANS, LEO), ENRG, TECH, BE, US

SUBJECT: VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS: DISCUSSION

TOPICS: NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION AND THE NEED
OF COUNTRIES LIKE BELGIUM FOR A NUCLEAR ENERGY
INDUSTRY

REF: BRUSSELS 10322

1. BELGIUM IS DEEPLY COMMITTED TO EXPANDING ITS PRESENT NUCLEAR POWER INFRASTRUCTURE, AS THE ONLY PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE TO MEETING ITS LONG-TERM ENERGY DEMANDS. BELGIUM IS 100 PERCENT DEPENDENT ON IMPORTED PETROLEUM. COAL PRODUCTION IS IN LONG-TERM DECLINE, WITH HALF OF DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION MET BY IMPORTS (PRIMARILY POLAND AND U.S.) DESPITE GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIZATION OF DOMESTIC COAL PRODUCTION.

2. NUCLEAR ENERGY NOW SUPPLIES ABOUT 20 PERCENT OF BELGIUM'S ELECTRICAL GENERATING CAPACITY. THREE LIGHT-WATER REACTORS ARE CURRENTLY IN OPERATION, WITH TWO MORE UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND A FURTHER TWO PLANNED FOR OPERATION

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BY 1985. BELGIUM HAS A RESEARCH REACTOR USING HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM. BELGIUM IS A POTENTIAL EXPORTER OF NUCLEAR EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY, AND POSSESSES FUEL FABRICATION CAPABILITY AS WELL AS POTENTIAL FOR FUEL REPROCESSING. BELGIUM RECENTLY BECAME A MEMBER OF THE LONDON NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS GROUP WITH U.S. SUPPORT, AND IS EXPECTED TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE INTERNATIONAL

NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION (INFCE) EXERCISE NOW IN ITS BEGINNING STAGES.

3. BELGIUM'S NUCLEAR FUTURE WAS THOROUGHLY ANALYZED AND DISCUSSED IN ITS 1976 "WISE MEN'S REPORT" WHICH RECOMMENDED EXPANDED NUCLEAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AND WHICH THE GOVERNMENT ADOPTED.

4. BELGIUM IS A SIGNATORY TO THE NPT AND SHARES U.S. NON-PROLIFERATION OBJECTIVES. HOWEVER, BELGIUM HAS TWO PRINCIPAL CONCERNS THAT MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT: (A) SECURE ACCESS TO URANIUM SUPPLIES FROM U.S. AND CANADA AND (B) BELIEF THAT REPROCESSING OF SPENT FUEL IS ESSENTIAL TO REDUCE EUROPE'S ENERGY DEPENDENCE AND TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF FAST BREEDER REACTORS. FOREIGN MINISTER SIMONET MADE REFERENCE TO LATTER POINT IN RECENT PRESS INTERVIEW (BRUSSELS 7556) WHEN HE ALLEGED THAT STATED U.S. POLICY WOULD HAVE EFFECT OF ENDING EUROPE'S LEAD IN THE FIELD OF REPROCESSING PLANTS.

5. TINDEMANS MAY URGE UPON THE PRESIDENT THE NEED FOR CONSTANT CONSULTATION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND EUROPE ON ALL ASPECTS OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY AND POLICY. EC IS ON RECORD AS BEING PREPARED TO CONSIDER ANY ALTERNATE FUEL CYCLE. BUT TINDEMANS WILL PROBABLY ALSO MAKE POINT THAT NON-PROLIFERATION IS BETTER SERVED BY EMPHASIZING CONTROLS

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AND THEIR IMPROVEMENT RATHER THAN BY IMPOSING RESTRICTIONS ON CERTAIN TECHNOLOGIES. THE ISSUE OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IAEA AND EURATOM MAY ARISE IN THE COURSE OF WORKING-LEVEL DISCUSSIONS, BUT WE DOUBT THAT THIS ISSUE WOULD GET MORE THAN PASSING MENTION IN TINDEMANS' TALKS WITH THE PRESIDENT. CHAMBERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIME MINISTER, NUCLEAR ENERGY, NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
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Decapton Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BRUSSE10450
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770305-0814
Format: TEL
From: BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770830/aaaaazch.tel
Line Count: 100
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BRUSSELS 10322
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1508432
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS: DISCUSSION TOPICS: NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION AND THE NEED OF COUNTRIES LIKE BELGIUM FOR A NUCLEAR ENERGY
TAGS: OVIP, ENRG, TECH, BE, US, (TINDEMANS, LEO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/70b1de55-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009